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ABSTRACT

Focusing on the changing roles of women and men in the home and in the work place and the need to prepare students for these changing roles, this booklet presents facts and information that challenge stereotypical views about sex roles and provides activities for teachers to test their own views. The information and activities encourage teachers to evaluate their expectations of all students. Teachers also evaluate how those expectations are carried out in their classrooms. Some of the activities challenge teachers to become sensitive to the demands of single parenting, recognize the changing family environment, become aware of the expectations of male and female students, and inform students about career opportunities. Expectations for students need not be based on whether they are male or female. One way to minimize this distinction is to recognize the individual talents and needs that each student brings to the classroom, and to establish expectations for students based on these individual variations, rather than on gender. (SM)

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IN AN AGE OF CHANGE,
WHERE ARE YOU...IN THE CLASSROOM?

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BOOK I

FOR BUILDING STAFF

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September 1983

Foreword

Our students in school today were born into, and have grown up, in an age of incredible change that has come about through new discoveries, inventions, innovations and technological advances which were unimagined just a decade ago. When significant changes in the work force and in the family are coupled with these advances, one recognizes that our students will have to prepare to enter a world radically different from the one in which today's teachers were born and raised. Judging whether or not these changes are for better or for worse is not a terribly productive form of analysis, since these changes are here - like it or not.

A more productive assessment is to evaluate the degree to which our educational system has acknowledged these changes and is equipping students with skills to survive as economically independent, responsible young adults.

This booklet, developed by Karla Atkinson of the Office for Sex Equity, focuses specifically on only one major change which our society has witnessed: the roles of women and men in the home and in the work place. This booklet presents selected facts and information that collectively challenges many of the stereotyped prescriptions our society has held about these roles. Further, this information is applied to the classroom which, in theory, is a laboratory for learning. Certainly students learn facts and polish academic skills in this laboratory. Yet students also begin - even in kindergarten-

"practicing" for adult roles as men and women.

Learning what it means to be masculine or feminine is serious business, though one would be hard pressed to find in a teacher's weekly lesson plan tasks or skills that address this learning. Yet any elementary teacher who has stood on the playground during recess and carefully observed the dynamics between fifth grade girls and boys is sensitive to the roles that are being played out and tested. Any middle school or high school counselor who works closely with the personal problems of teens can often map out the conflict between the expectations of others and the image of self.

The information and activities presented are offered, then, with the hope that teachers who read this material will evaluate their expectations for all students and how those expectations are being played out in their classrooms in light of a changing world.

FACT	CHECK IT OUT...
*Women will be increasingly employed outside the home for some period of time in their lives.	*Ask your students how many of them have both parents or their only parent working outside the house. *Ask them to compare and see if they know what jobs pay better than others. *Do students hold positive or negative values about certain jobs? What jobs are associated positively? What jobs are associated negatively?

WOMEN IN THE WORK FORCE

Year	Number
1960	23,000,000
1970	31,000,000
1980	45,000,000
1981	47,000,000
1982	48,000,000

Source: The Female-Male Earnings Gap, Dept. of Labor, Sept. 1982

*Women will continue to earn less than men. On the average they will earn 59¢ for every dollar.

MALE AND FEMALE ANNUAL EARNINGS

Year	Male Earnings	Female Earnings	
1960	5,417	3,293	(60.8%)
1970	8,966	5,323	(59.4%)
1981	20,260	12,001	(59.2%)

Source: The Female-Male Earnings Gap, Dept. of Labor, Sept. 1982

IF SO...

*What have you done recently in Career Education in your classroom?

*Have you stressed nontraditional jobs for students?

*Can you hear a stereotyped statement about jobs when a student says it?

*Do you challenge it?

*Do you reject an outdated film about jobs because it is stereotyped?

*Do you know how to use such an outdated film as a teaching tool?

FACT	CHECK IT OUT...

*Women are increasingly heading families and becoming the sole support of that family.

PERCENT OF FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS AMONG ALL FAMILIES

Race of Family	1970	1981
Black	30.6%	47.5%
White	7.8%	14.7%
Hispanic	16.9%	21.8%

Source: A Growing Crisis, U.S. Civil Rights Commission, May 1983

*Female-headed households in poverty continue to increase.

PERCENT OF FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

Race of Family	1978	1981
Black	50.6%	52.9%
White	23.5%	27.4%
Hispanic	53.1%	53.2%

Source: A Growing Crisis, U.S. Civil Rights Commission, May 1983

*Conduct your own (informal) count of the number of students in your classroom who come from single parent homes. Currently 1 in 5 children entering public schools comes from a single parent family.

*Is your classroom typical, according to this statistic?

IF SO...

*Do you send notes home reading "Dear Parents" or "Dear Mom and Dad?"

*Are you sensitive to the demands of single parenting?

*Do you give homework assignments and take on class projects that presume a certain (perhaps higher) standard of living for each student's family?

FACT

Despite advances in education and training, women continue to earn less than males in the same occupational field.

MALE AND FEMALE WEEKLY EARNINGS
1981

Field	Male Earnings	Female Earnings
Professional, Technical	$439	$316
Managers and Administrators	466	283
Sales	366	190
Clerical	328	220
Craft	360	239
Operatives	298	187
Service Wkrs.	238	170
Private/Hshld.	-	104

Source: Monthly Labor Review, April 1982

CHECK IT OUT...

*Have the students rank order the job fields, from highest paying to lowest paying before giving any salary information.

*Present this chart to the students. Have students compute the salary differences by subtracting or figuring percentages or fractions, depending upon their skill level.

*Discuss why these differences exist.

IF SO...

*Do you place more importance on certain classroom tasks?

*Are girls and boys expected to equitably share these classroom tasks?

*Do you praise one sex more than the other, though each are performing the same task as well?

*When was the last time you rewarded a student outloud, in front of the class, for excelling in something a student of that sex isn't expected to do (according to the stereotype?)

FACT	CHECK IT OUT...
The typical American family - with father working and mother at home caring for children - is rapidly disappearing. It constituted only 7% of all families in the nation in 1979. SINCE 1970, THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF: - two earner families, with both husband and wife working - working mothers with children under 18 years of age of all races - one parent families, especially those headed by females - people living together through no blood, adoptive or legal relationship - single mothers with children to support, with out-of-wedlock births as one principal contributor to this category - marriages dissolved through divorce, separation or desertion - teenage births - households applying for federal financial assistance - female households classified at poverty level	*Discuss all types of household arrangements, such as two parents - both working, two parent - one working, one parent - working, one parent - not working, living with grandparents, with a guardian, with a group of relatives, with boyfriends or girlfriends of the parent, with other unrelated adults, etc. *Ask your students to describe their family. *How many fit into the "typical" family? IF SO... *What was the last story about a family you read to your students? Was this family typical or atypical? *Think of any fairy tale or nursery rhyme involving a family. Can you quickly revise it and tell it to your students so that it suggests nontraditional and traditional roles for the characters? *Do you choose to work, or must you work? Are you any different from most other adults of your sex that you know well?

FACT

Despite the increased number of women entering the work force, women remain segregated in jobs.

WHERE WOMEN ARE EMPLOYED

Field	1980
Professional, Technical	16.0%
Managers and Administrators	7.5%
Sales Workers	3.8%
Clerical	37.1%
Craft	2.3%
Operatives (except transport)	14.3%
Service Workers	15.8%
Laborers	1.3%
Private Household Workers	1.6%
Other	.3%

Source: Monthly Labor Review, April 1982

CHECK IT OUT...

*Make a list of the jobs the parents of your students have.(Make a general comparison of the wages paid for these jobs).

*Ask your students what job they will choose when they have to begin working.

*List these jobs in two categories (one developed by female students; one developed by male students).

*Compare the expectations of your male and female students.

IF SO...

*Do you have a collection (or can you access) classroom materials that show men and women in nontraditional jobs?

*Who was the last guest speaker you invited to your classroom? For what reason?

*Do you know enough about these broad occupational fields to discuss them with students? Can you name five jobs in each field?

FACT	CHECK IT OUT...
Students continue to admire female and male heroes who personify sex stereotyped behaviors.	*Conduct your own mini poll in class by written ballot. Write the names on a list. *Are there any authors? scientists? lawyers? musicians? political figures? architects? artists? *How many are females? males? *What are those qualities which students appear to admire and would like to emulate, based on this list?
In 1982 the World Almanac and Book of Facts polled 2,000 eighth grade American students to learn which persons they most admire and would like to be like when they grow up. The top voter getter was Burt Reynolds. Others included in a list of 30 were: John Belushi Steve Martin Richard Pryor Robert Redford Alan Alda Although half those students polled were girls, only five women appeared on the list. All were actresses, models or pop singers. Every name on the list was an entertainer or sports figure.	IF SO... *Select one male and one female in the same field who represent, in your judgement, an appreciation of human values and humane activities (ex. Madame Curie and James Salk; Barbara Jordan and Justice Douglas; Mary Cassatt and Degas). *Teach the students about these people by reading to them, assigning a research project, showing a movie, discussing, playing twenty questions, etc. *Challenge the stereotypes through a balance in the character of the role models you bring into your classroom.

FACT

Both male and female students hold a fundamental contempt for females.

> Dr. Alice Baumgartner, Institute for Equality in Education, recently surveyed 2,000 children, grades 3-12, throughout the State of Colorado. She simply asked, "If you woke up tomorrow and discovered that you were a (boy)(girl), how would your life be different?"
>
> Redbook, Feb. 1983

The girls replied:

"I would be treated better. I would get paid more, and be able to do more things" (4th grade)

"People would take my decisions and beliefs more seriously" (11th grade)

The boys replied:

"I'd be stupid and weak as a string" (6th grade)

"I would hope it was a bad dream and go back to sleep" (6th grade)

CHECK IT OUT...

*Start by finding out what your students actually think of the opposite sex. Use an open-ended question, an open-ended story, fill in the blank sheets, separate lists or simply good discussion questions.

*How do the reactions of your students compare to the reactions of the students in the national survey?

IF SO...

*Recall most recently the student who asked for help in your classroom. Was the student male or female?

*Recall most recently the student you disciplined for being noisy and disruptive. Was the student male or female?

*Recall most recently the time a girl teased a boy. What was the incident?

*Recall most recently the time a boy teased a girl. What was the incident?

*Do you have classroom competitions where the boys play the girls in spelling or math or vocabulary? Who won? Who really got enthused? Why?

FACT	CHECK IT OUT...
Boys and girls receive differential treatment in classrooms starting in nursery school and continuing throughout their schooling. According to the Chief State School Officers Resource Center on Sex Equity, "Teachers, on the other hand, may be doing considerably more differential socialization by sex (than parents do)." Concerns, January 1982 Collectively research has proven that: GIRLS *receive negative feedback for the content of their academic work *give up more easily after academic failure than boys do *develop a "learned helplessness" BOYS *receive negative feedback for lack of neatness and not trying hard enough *have more reading and discipline problems *are more actively encouraged in the math fields than girls	*Mentally list your poorer readers. Are there more males than females? *Mentally list the last five students you had to refer for discipline problems. Were there more boys than girls? *Analyze the next classroom period wherein a new skill is introduced. Which sex asks for help from you, as the teacher, more often? *Who is the neatest student? The noisest? Most shy? Best volunteer? Class leader? Do these students fit into the stereotyped patterns suggested by the research? IF SO... *During a fifteen or twenty minute free period in your classroom, try this activity. Put the wastebasket in front of the room and have each student crush a used piece of paper into a ball. Tell the students they will have three times to throw the paper in the basket. Tell them they can stand as close to the basket as they like. Keep score on the blackboard by rows or alphabetical names - not by sex. At the end of the game, Observe and ask yourself: Do you see any indications of beginning patterns of achievement? Of competition? Of fearing to fail? Of confidence in task performance?

IN CONCLUSION

All people must find a way of categorizing new information as it is presented to them. Stereotyping is a convenient way to catagorize people - in this case students - who are "new" to classroom teachers each year, using the obvious dimension of sex.

Just as categorizing children's academic performance or social behavior or leadership skills on the basis of height or hair color is not productive, it is important to understand that female/male is neither a valid, nor healthy, distinction on which teachers' expectations for students should rest. One way to minimize this distinction is to recognize the individual talents and needs that each student may bring to the classroom, and to establish expectations for students based on these individual variations, rather than on sex.

Today there are strong indications within the family and in the work force that sex role stereotypes cannot prescribe the skills which all young people must have to adopt to, and survive in, a rapidly changing world. As a "laboratory for learning," each classroom is a potential setting for encouraging students to practice and test out interests, knowledge and experiences which will be practical, yet flexible enough, to meet the demands of societal changes.

There are a number of resources, activities and suggestions available to promote a sex fair or sex affirmative atmosphere in your classroom and they're free for the asking! Simply contact the Office for Sex Equity in Education, Michigan Department of Education, P.O. Box 30008, 4-Ottawa, South, Lansing, Michigan 48909, for more information.